

Chichester District Council

THE COUNCIL (SPECIAL)

27 September 2017

A27 Chichester Bypass Improvement Scheme

1. Contacts

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2. Recommendation

The Council is recommended to consider the following report and determine the position of the Council in respect of a scheme to improve the A27 at Chichester.

3. Background

- 3.1 Most members will recall the report considered by the Cabinet and Council in September 2016 concerning the options proposed by Highways England to improve the A27 at Chichester. The report outlined the five options published for consultation, reviewed the consultation documents and considered the potential benefits and adverse effects of the different options, including how they might affect local communities, businesses and visitors to Chichester District.
- 3.2 Based upon the information made available by Highways England, the Council resolved to provide qualified support to option 2 and to approve the wider comments within the appendix to that report as the Council's formal response. However, the Council made it clear that it was only minded to support option 2 provided that Highways England gave serious consideration to the following:
 - (i) Strategic improvements to the Portfield roundabout to increase east-west capacity, possibly including an eastbound flyover for cars and light vans only using the A27;
 - (ii) The provision of good access for traffic going from the B2145 to the east of Chichester without impeding through east-west traffic (possibly by a slip road from the Whyke Road flyover down to the A27 or a right turn from the flyover down to the A27);

- (iii) The reduction of the length of the Stockbridge Link Road, either to only a section from the A286 to the Fishbourne roundabout or to the two sections from the B2201 via the A286 to the Fishbourne roundabout;
- (iv) The provision of safe, segregated crossings of the A27 for cyclists and pedestrians at the Bognor Road, Whyke Road, Stockbridge Road and Fishbourne junctions;
- (v) The installation of noise abatement screens on the flyovers;
- (vi) The examination of the scope for lowering the roundabouts and flyovers at the Bognor Road and, especially, Fishbourne junctions to reduce visual impact; and
- (vii) The use of Highways England's Designated Fund to finance the mitigation measures listed above.

- 3.3 In addition and importantly, the Council requested for purposes of transparency and community cohesion, that the Secretary of State for Transport provides the justification for discounting the previously prepared two offline routes to the north of the city.
- 3.4 Following this, in January 2017, the Council gave further consideration to the matter and resolved that the Secretary of State be requested to instruct Highways England, firstly, to undertake a new consultation on improvements to the A27 around Chichester, with an extended and reassessed range of options, including the two previously developed northern bypass options and, secondly, to publish without delay the results of the consultation held between July and September 2016.
- 3.5 Subsequently the Secretary of State wrote to Highways England on 28 February 2017 to announce that he had decided to cancel the scheme, noting that the scheme was controversial, the withdrawal of support by the local councils for the shortlisted options and the significant local campaigns. The Worthing and Lancing and Arundel Improvement Schemes remain within the current Highways England programme and have recently completed or are nearing completion of the public consultation stage.
- 3.6 In response to this announcement, West Sussex County Council convened a community meeting to try to develop a way forward. The Build A Better A27 initiative was launched by the County Council and supported by the District Council. A number of well attended workshops have been held and there continues to be an ongoing dialogue. At the same time the District and County Council's, together with the MP for Chichester, have continued to engage with Highways England to understand the viable options and to seek more time to enable the community led work to develop a way forward for the A27 at Chichester.
- 3.7 The culmination of the dialogue with Government and Highways England, supported by the District and County Councils and led by the MP, is set out in the attached letter dated 6 September 2017 addressed to Gillian Keegan MP.

4. Outcomes to be Achieved

- 4.1 Council determines a preference for pursuing a scheme to improve the A27 at Chichester to address issues of congestion and extensive queuing together with other related issues such as air quality. The aims and objectives for the improvement scheme were set out within the Highways England 2016 consultation document.

5. Proposal

- 5.1 The letter to Gillian Keegan MP from Highways England essentially outlines two possible approaches for taking forward a scheme to improve the A27 at Chichester:
 - A. RIS 1 (2015 – 2020). This requires an immediate announcement by the end of September (presumably by the Secretary of State) that one of the options from the 2016 consultation is now the preferred route and detailed design work will commence, including further discussions with the district and county council about potential mitigations and broader community and environmental benefits. Work can then commence within the RIS 1 timeframe i.e. by the end of March 2020.
 - B. RIS 2 (post 2020). This allows time for active community engagement around potential alternatives and is seen as bringing considerable benefits, however there are also risks as other national schemes may take priority and work is unlikely to commence before 2023.
- 5.2 The letter makes clear that within approach A (RIS 1) there is insufficient time to allow for broader community engagement in the development of an improved scheme.
- 5.3 The prospect of a northern route option has proved to be of interest to some in the community and it is worth noting what Highways England has to say about this. The letter says '*....this idea has almost no probability of success.*'
- 5.4 A further point to bear in mind is that strategic growth allocations within the adopted Chichester Local Plan (2014 – 2029) are dependent upon works to the A27 at Chichester to mitigate the impact of proposed development. The District Council is now collecting developer contributions (to be held by Highways England) to fund the necessary mitigation works. Furthermore, there is a strong likelihood that in the absence of a wider improvement scheme, the Review of the Chichester Local Plan will have implications for the A27 and potentially require yet further works to mitigate the impact. The complete absence of any improvement to the A27 does also have potential development implications as ultimately a point will be reached at which Highways England becomes concerned about the capacity of the existing route to safely and conveniently accommodate any increase in activity levels.
- 5.5 It has become clear that the government views both support from the local authorities and community support as significant considerations. The Council should therefore consider the two possible approaches outlined above and

determine which best meets the Council's ambitions for an improved A27 bypass at Chichester.

6. Alternatives Considered

- 6.1 Positive and realistic approaches are outlined in this report. Alternatively the Council could of course decline to comment further.

7. Resource and legal implications

- 7.1 The resource and legal implications were set out in the September 2016 report to the Cabinet and the Council.

8. Consultation

- 8.1 A community workshop meeting is to be held on 25 September 2017 and will be attended by Gillian Keegan MP. Feedback from the meeting is not available at the time of writing this report but will be provided as an update to Council.

9. Community Impact and Corporate Risks

- 9.1 Again, these were set out in the earlier report but it is worth noting the positive comments by Highways England about the potential benefits (and risks) of further community engagement provided by approach B.

10. Other Implications

Are there any implications for the following? If you tick "Yes", list your impact assessment as a background paper in paragraph 13 and explain any major risks in paragraph 9		
	Yes	No
Crime and Disorder The Council has a duty "to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area". Do the proposals in the report have any implications for increasing or reducing crime and disorder?		X
Climate Change Are there any implications for the mitigation of or adaptation to climate change? If in doubt, seek advice from the Environmental Strategy Unit (ESU).		X
Human Rights and Equality Impact You should complete an Equality Impact Assessment when developing new services, policies or projects or significantly changing existing ones. For more information, see Equalities FAQs and guidance on the intranet or contact Corporate Policy.		X
Safeguarding and Early Help The Council has a duty to cooperate with others to safeguard children and adults at risk. Do these proposals have any implication for either increasing or reducing the levels of risk to children or adults at risk? The Council has committed to dealing with issues at the earliest opportunity, do these proposals have any implication in reducing or increasing demand on Council services?		X
Other (please specify) eg Biodiversity		X

11. Appendices

11.1 Letter to Gillian Keegan MP from Highways England dated 6 September 2017.

12. Background Papers

12.1 Letter from Secretary of State for Transport to Highways England dated 28 February 2017.

12.2 Letter from Highways England to Chichester District Council dated 14 March 2017

12.3 Letter from Highways England to West Sussex County Council dated 11 April 2017

12.4 Notes of meeting held with Highways England on 7 July 2017